

Image Making and Personal Narratives with Japanese-American Survivors of World War II Internment Camps

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Abstract

This qualitative study explored the verbal and art making responses of Japanese-American elders who experienced the trauma of internment during World War II. Six Nisei (second generation Japanese-Americans) were asked to recall memories of their experiences during and immediately following internment; 3 of the participants also created art images that enhanced memories and evoked emotion. From an in-depth review of the data, the authors identify seven prominent themes: (a) stressful living conditions in camp, (b) art and creativity for camp survival, (c) loss and deprivation, (d) separation or division of family and community ties, (e) disruption of identity, (f) resilience and reaffirmation of values, and (g) the need for legacy and social justice. The study found that participants' internalized shame from being labeled "enemy aliens" has evolved into an externalized concern for discriminatory actions against minority groups that are marginalized by war.

Introduction

During World War II, 110,000 Japanese-Americans living in the western United States were forcibly relocated and interned in barely inhabitable "camps." Many who experienced this trauma are reluctant to talk about that dark time and have not shared their experiences with family and friends. Given an opportunity to do so, through a qualitative research study that combined art making, poetry, and in-depth interviews, 6 elderly Japanese-American participants shared the difficulties their families experienced. This study is timely because as the years pass, fewer former internees are left to share their stories. The participants felt an urgency to relate their experiences of the harms of arbitrary racial profiling in light of current events. An existing attitude in the United States toward those who do not fit the desired American profile seems to have contributed to a

reemergence of racial profiling. This strategy for managing the anxiety of a perceived outside threat has precedent in the Japanese-American experience. This study may provide important insight for art therapists who witness the effects of phobic reactions to cultural and ethnic difference, as well as coping strategies that ameliorate the trauma. The authors found that alternative and creative methods further illuminated the profound experiences of six Japanese-Americans who experienced internment during WWII.

Literature Review

History of Japanese-American Internment

Discrimination and prejudice against Japanese-Americans began long before the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. The bombing gave additional fuel to racist sentiments already held by mainstream United States citizens and leaders at the time, with government propaganda depicting Japanese-Americans as rats, dogs, gorillas, and snakes (Cooper, 2000). In February, 1942, Congressman John Ranken proclaimed, "Once a Jap, always a Jap. You can't any more regenerate a Jap than you can reverse the laws of nature" (Gesensway & Roseman, 1987, p. 17).

President Franklin Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942, which gave military commanders the power to "exclude any and all persons" from military zones. Washington, California, Oregon, and Arizona were identified as vulnerable military zones, and Japanese-Americans living there were targeted for exclusion (Thomas & Nishimoto, 1946; U.S. Department of War, 1979). Any person of Japanese ancestry could be removed from any location without a trial or hearing, and many family homes were raided by the FBI in the middle of the night (Hoshino, personal communication, 1994; McGoldrick, Giordano, & Pearce, 1996).

The official justification for the evacuation was to thwart espionage and sabotage. However, elderly people, newborn babies, young children, children from orphanages, and even children adopted by Caucasian parents were not exempt from removal. Anyone having 1/16th or more of Japanese parentage was included (Uyeda, 1995, as cited in Burton, Farrell, Lord, & Lord, 2002). Ironically, two-thirds of those interned were U.S. citizens.

Japanese-American residents were given short notice to leave their homes and relocate to temporary detention

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camps. Many were forced to sell their homes, property, and sentimental belongings for very little compensation. In a published account, one internee stated:

We were given eight days to liquidate our possessions. It is difficult to describe the feeling of despair and humiliation experienced by all of us as we watched the Caucasians coming to look over our possessions and offering such nominal amounts, knowing we had no recourse but to accept whatever they were offering because we did not know what the future held for us. (Armor & Write, 1998, p. 4)

Traumatic Experience and Racial Profiling

What impact did being uprooted have upon those interned? How does one cope with racial injustice and being forced to leave one's home and community, and to move to an unknown destination for an undetermined period of time? These questions are important because a transformation of identity occurred as a result of the disruption in the Japanese-American community. It is essential to understand each family's belief system rooted in its cultural and religious traditions, which influence family members' perceptions and responses to trauma (Walsh, 2006). In dealing with traumatic experiences, the body, mind, spirit, and relationships with others can be wounded (Walsh, 2006). Art therapy has been used as a treatment for trauma resulting from war, natural disaster, community tensions, family crisis, and displaced persons (Rubin, 1999).

Racial, ethnic, religious, and nationality profiling are commonly grouped under the umbrella term "racial profiling," which has been practiced throughout U.S. history, most recently in relation to the "war on terror" (Malkin, 2004). Japanese-Americans were referred to as "enemy aliens" during WWII. Today, Arabs, Arab-Americans, and Muslims are being represented as "the enemy" in U.S. society (Ore, 2003).

Method

The authors took a qualitative approach to their study because with qualitative data one can "preserve chronological flow, see precisely which events led to which consequences, and derive fruitful explanations...they help researchers to get beyond initial conceptions and to generate or revise conceptual frameworks" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 1). Using a qualitative framework, we established research parameters that were open-ended and allowed for change in order to respectfully follow the lead of our participants and to obtain context-rich descriptions of their experiences. A wealth of information was generated from 160 pages of interview transcripts that brought the presence of our participants' ancestors into the room with us.

Participants

We worked with Japanese-American community liaisons acquainted with former internees to obtain the names of potential participants who had an interest in

adding to the literature on WWII internment. Potential participants were contacted by phone; the research was described to them and they were invited to participate. Six Nisei (second generation Japanese-Americans) who had experienced internment were interviewed in their homes on four separate occasions. To preserve confidentiality, all participants are identified by pseudonyms. Of the four sets of interviews that were conducted, two were with couples, and two were with individuals. The participants are described as follows:

- **Tani (age 80) and Taan Sato (age 79).** Tani was 18 when she and her family were interned at the Minidoka camp in Idaho. Sponsorship allowed her to leave the camp and attend school in Illinois. She later met and married Taan and raised four children. Taan was 17 when he and his family were relocated to the Pinedale Assembly Center in Fresno, California, and later to Tule Lake. He enlisted in the U.S. Army while in camp and served in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team.
- **Meg (age 74) and Bill Okamura (age 78).** Meg was 12 when she and her family were interned at the Minidoka camp in Idaho. Bill was 16 when he and his family were removed from their home in Alaska. Meg's family stayed together; Bill's family went to Minidoka while their father was sent to Lordsburg, New Mexico. Bill was drafted after the war and later attended college, where he met Meg. They owned a business together and had three sons.
- **Ted Kanaka (age 69).** Ted was 7 when he and his family were interned. They were evacuated to Pinedale, then Tule Lake, and finally to Heart Mountain, Wyoming. Ted later married and had three children.
- **Sonoko Yamaguchi (75).** Sonoko was 13 at the time she and her family were interned in Minidoka, Idaho. Sonoko later married and had four children.

Procedure

The interviews were audio- and videotaped, and included a request for art making. Oil pastels, chalk pastels, colored markers, graphic pencils, and 12" x 18" white paper were provided. The participants were asked to create images as follows:

1. Draw an image that comes to your mind of your family during the time of your internment;
2. Draw an image that comes to your mind of your family when you think of the decade following internment;
3. Is there any particular wisdom you gained from your internment and post-internment experiences? If so, draw an image or symbol to represent what wisdom you would like to share with your children and grandchildren about the internment.

One participant stated that her creativity was in the form of poetry and prose, which was included in the research with her consent. Two participants were art collectors. While only 3 of the 6 participants drew, all maintained creative outlets.

Through a review of images and transcribed data, the researchers examined the role of creativity in coping with traumatic stress, both within the context of the internment and within Japanese-American culture in general. The following questions guided the data collection and analysis:

1. Did the act of drawing images from the past enhance memory among Japanese-American elders incarcerated during World War II? If so, how?
2. Did the act of drawing images from the past evoke more emotion among these Japanese-American elders than would be the case if they were talking about their experiences without creating artwork?
3. Did the act of drawing images from the past influence the story itself? If so, how? Did it bring forth new insights or forgotten memories?

The researchers transcribed over 15 hours of taped interviews and completed a thematic analysis of the artwork. A strategy of inductive analysis was used to compare and interpret interview data and artworks to generate cross-case themes, patterns, and findings (Patton, 2002). This in-depth study revealed seven persistent and prominent themes related to participants' particular experiences of trauma from the circumstances of relocation and internment: (a) stressful living conditions in camp, (b) art and creativity for camp survival, (c) loss and deprivation, (d) separation or division of family and community ties, (e) disruption of identity, (f) resilience and reaffirmation of values, and (g) the need for legacy and social justice.

Thematic Analysis

Stressful Living Conditions in Camp

The relocation of Japanese Americans to internment camps began in March, 1942, and was complete by June of that year. As participant Bill Okamura described, "The barracks held maybe about six or seven families or so, one barrack partitioned by a 6-foot wall between each of the rooms, and nothing was private. You could hear from one end to the other."

The ten relocation camps were built in deserts and swamps, in desolate and hostile areas of the United States known for their extreme weather conditions (Gensensway & Roseman, 1987). The physical conditions in the camps and their environments profoundly impacted daily life, and remained vivid memories for the internees. Internment camp housing provided the families with only the bare necessities. Participant Tani Sato's drawing (Figure 1) depicts a typical 20' x 20' barracks room that verifies published accounts of rooms containing only "a pot-bellied stove, a single electric light hanging from the ceiling, an army cot for each person and a blanket for the bed" (Takaki, 1993, p. 383). About their camp housing, participant Ted Kanaka recalled: "We were still a very close family, and we had to be...because we were all in one 20 by 20 foot room and we ate in mess halls. We had no running water or toilet facilities in the rooms—we had to go to a common toilet, and shower and things like that in this common area."

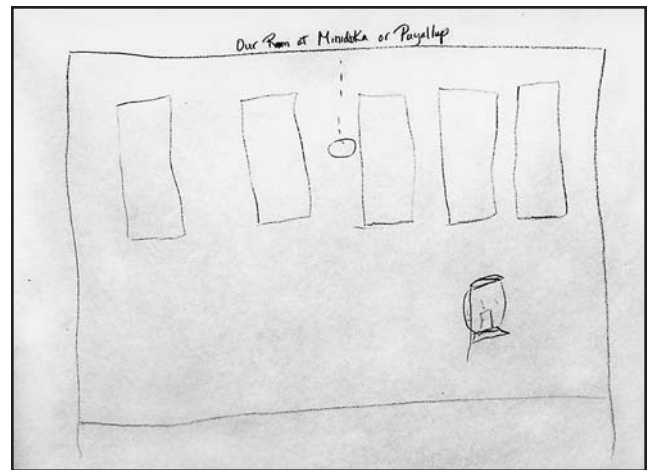


Figure 1

Participants in the study also verified accounts that people living in a block shared a common mess hall with 250 to 300 people at a time (Yatsushiro, 1979). Frequent contamination of food and water caused repeated outbreaks of dysentery that plagued internment camp residents (Jensen, 1997). All but one of the camps was surrounded by barbed wire. Armed soldiers manned watchtowers, and searchlights swept the camps at night. A justification of internment often cited to the internees—that their safety was being ensured—was contradicted by the fact that machine guns were pointed inward, toward the internees (Shelton, 2002).

Art and Creativity for Camp Survival

Most of the camps had no building materials available for improving or disguising the bleak barracks' exteriors. In fact, most camps had rules against making any alterations or additions to structures. However, upon entering their tarpaper barracks, many internees began thinking about what they might do to make their living quarters more habitable and attractive (Eaton, 1952). Barracks interiors were enhanced by creating something out of nothing, such as chairs and tables made out of found scraps of wood. They planted gardens with flowers, vegetables, and other vegetation. When nothing else was available, some internees made gardens out of stones.

The combined creative spirit of an entire community made the bleak environment of the camp more tolerable, and some internees found that art making was necessary for both physical and psychological survival. One daughter was convinced that her father, "a pacifist who turned to art to escape the realities of war," would have "died in camp if it weren't for his art" (Gensensway & Roseman, 1987, p. 22).

Many internees expressed themselves through their art, allowing them to comment on their situation, gain some control over it, and symbolically escape the confinement of the camp (Gensensway & Roseman, 1987). An excellent example of this creative spirit is reflected in a cartoon depiction of people panicking to pick up coal to take



Figure 2

back to the barracks, created by participant Ted Kanaka's father in camp (Figure 2).

Being interned involved a sudden unexpected surplus of time, much of which was used in creative endeavors, as Sonoko Yamaguchi noted: "Issei ladies [first generation Japanese-Americans] like my mother... for the first time had time, so they took up crafts. So, in that way they were able to...enjoy the other women." However, as Meg Okamura described, internment did not involve a surplus of materials with which to be creative:

Older folks, amazingly, were resourceful. Out of nothing they would create...artwork. They would find things in the desert. They would pick up greasewood [sagebrush roots] and polish them and make them into things...they made furniture and I can remember, from cantaloupe seeds we made necklaces. People made gardens out of nothing; there was sand there but some of us had little areas where we planted vegetables.

The researchers heard many interesting stories of people making something from virtually nothing. Internees used found objects such as cloth, shells, newspaper, wood, and any scrap of material that could be scavenged to create both functional and aesthetic items such as walking sticks, furniture, dolls, flowers, and musical instruments (Eaton, 1952). Taan Sato's uncle scavenged greasewood to create a lamp while in camp.

Sonoko remembers a woman who turned her creative efforts to dollmaking:

She made these beautiful dolls in camp. And how she learned how to make them and make these masks for these dolls. What she did is she got toilet paper and there was no glue so she used...rice from the camp and made a paste...her husband was a carpenter so he...made a sharp instrument and carved some of the dolls. She didn't have a paintbrush so she chewed those toothpicks...to paint with.

Loss and Deprivation

The abrupt evacuation and relocation of Japanese-Americans meant that homes, businesses, jobs, personal belongings, mementos, and family pets were left behind.

For young and old, a lifetime of possessions was reduced to two suitcases, as Sonoko related: "We were allowed two suitcases. That's all, which included our clothing so we had to leave everything.... All our dolls or whatever we had... it was very painful to have to leave everything."

Internment was an unending experience of loss and deprivation; privacy was a non-existent commodity at camp. Barracks, latrines and showers were all communal, as Bill described: "The first thing I remember down there was the communal toilets. There was no actual privacy there because it seemed like it was just a big, maybe about an 8 x 12 foot board, with holes cut across, maybe about six or ten holes."

Eventually, as the war continued, interned sons were allowed to enlist to fight for the country that had branded them, their parents, and their grandparents as "enemy aliens." Bill observed: "Talk about ironic...here we are going to be interned, and the boys are going to fight for their country." It is difficult to fathom this degree of incongruence and loss. When these sons died, parents were notified through the mail and were deprived from obtaining their bodies for burial.

Separation or Division of Family and Community Ties

Japanese-Americans found both family and community divided by internment. Not only were they physically separated from their homes, communities, schools, and livelihoods, but family members often were separated from each other. Participant Bill Okamura's father, for example, was sent to a different camp.

For those families that remained intact, the family structure was changed profoundly. In their stark and crowded living spaces, mothers no longer cooked the family meals, and the family no longer ate together, instead joining dozens of others for communal meals in the mess halls:

Tani: "In the Japanese family the father is the head usually. He tells you what to do. But the family kinda..."

Taan: "Disintegrated—the family structure was..."

Tani: "Because he had no power to tell us what to do anymore and then, um, we would go to the mess hall to eat. But the children didn't have to go with their parents; they could go to any mess hall they wanted. They'd eat with their friends."

The traditional patriarchal structure of the family collapsed with the father's loss of status and ability to provide for the family. As confirmed by study participants, camp administrators often chose younger, more fluent, second-generation teenagers as spokesmen and liaisons for the camp community over their elders (Uchida, 1982).

Confusion and concern over how to prove their loyalty to America, and how to mitigate the distrust and condemnation of fellow Americans, was always at the forefront of the internees' minds. Even as a young child at the Heart Mountain camp, Ted recalled: "I remember talking with my friends about, 'Gee, what if Japan wins the war? What's going to happen?' or 'What if the United States wins the war? What's going to happen?'"

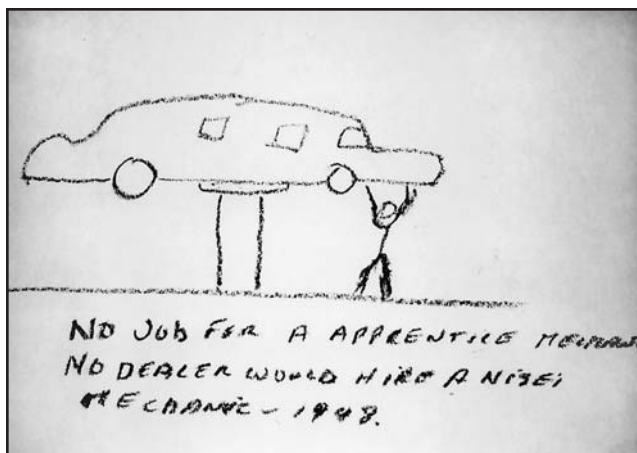


Figure 3

One of the most divisive aspects of internment occurred in February of 1943, in the form of the "Loyalty Oath," a questionnaire that was administered in all camps to men over the age of 17 in an effort to make eligible for military service those who had been previously declared legally ineligible (Matsui, 1996; Omori, 1999). How individuals answered this questionnaire caused a rift among internees that still exists today, over 60 years later. The "Loyalty Oath" essentially pitted those who believed their rights as U.S. citizens would be reinstated if they professed absolute loyalty against those who refused to profess loyalty unless their rights as citizens were restored.

The closure of the camps shortly before the end of the war brought new dilemmas. Having lost their livelihood, property, and community support, many internees were paralyzed by their sudden "freedom." Although the war was over, discrimination against Japanese-Americans still ran deep, as can be seen in Taan's drawing "No Job for Apprentice Mechanic" (Figure 3). Systematically stripped of personal power and autonomy, many Japanese-Americans felt that their new state of "freedom" held few viable options for them. As Tani expressed, "They had been in the camps for over 2 years and then to have to leave?? And where were they going to go?!"

Ted moved to a remote farm in Illinois and described the family's move by stating: "Then we went to this little farmhouse that was broken down and this was where we were to live. And there was no electricity, no inside toilets, no running water. It was that part of Illinois that was still pretty backward. And I remember my mother saying 'Why did you bring us out here? This is worse than camp!'"

Disruption of Identity

The participants' sense of personal and collective identity was challenged by the internment experience. Five participants were adolescents at the time of internment, further exacerbating normal adolescent developmental issues concerning identity formation. Other issues relating to identity included being perceived as enemy aliens, having their loyalty questioned, and ultimately finding a voice to speak out against the injustice of internment.

Defining one's identity was a major theme running through the participants' narratives. All were U.S. citizens yet also wished to remain connected to their Japanese heritage. Takaki (1993) noted that many second-generation Japanese did not want to reject the culture of their parents, which had also become a part of themselves. However, the fact of the internment signaled to internees that embracing the two cultures would not be tolerated. By virtue of their ethnic heritage and physically distinct characteristics, Japanese-Americans were now the enemy. Ted gave insight into this situation: "I think the worst thing all the time was looking out through the barbed wire, and then knowing that you are in prison. That you're there because, you know, you're Japanese. And that was, to me, the most hurtful thing."

One way to prove loyalty to the United States was to enlist to fight for the country that had imprisoned them. Ted described: "There are others that felt, 'Hey, you know, I'm going to fight for America. I'm an American and even though I'm being treated badly, I'm gonna go and prove my loyalty.'" Japanese-American enlistees served in segregated units, including the 100th Battalion from Hawaii and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team (RCT), the most highly decorated American unit of World War II. More than 2,500 men from Hawaii and 1,300 men from the mainland joined. Most of the mainland enlistees came from the internment camps that still held their wives, parents, and siblings. Bill noted:

Well, they really proved something. The sort of unsung stories, the guys that served in the Pacific. They were very important you know because they understood Japanese. I think the Japanese did not realize this during wartime really, and I think it really helped the troops a lot.

Resilience and Reaffirmation of Values

In her tribute to William Nakamura and James Okubo, two 442nd RCT enlistees who were posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor in 2001, research participant Sonoko identified the values held dear by Japanese-Americans of her generation:

At home William Nakamura and James Okubo were also imbued with values passed on by their parents. You must study. You must work hard, peppered with "gaman" (quiet endurance), "shikkari" (perseverance), "giri" (sense of duty), "haji" (shame-pride), "on" (debt of gratitude), "shikata-ganai" (it cannot be helped).

With these core values, Japanese-American internees were able to make the best of an unjust and intolerable situation. For example, despite the hardships and incredible loss resulting from the internment, none of the participants described themselves as "victims." Sonoko explained, "I mean it is one of those things in life you endure. It was like, you know, you do the best—always this philosophy."

Participants found strength and pride from the fact they had overcome immense adversity. Describing the concept of resilience as it applies to trauma, Wolin and

Wolin (1993) noted, "While early hardship can cause enduring pain, often it is also a breeding ground for uncommon strength and courage" (p. vii). These authors found that resilient survivors have insight, relationships, initiative, creativity, humor, and morality. Our study participants confirmed these aspects as instrumental in their coping from trauma.

Need for Legacy and Social Justice

As the end of World War II approached, the War Department urged President Roosevelt to bring the exclusion to an end. Secretary of the Interior Harold Ikes urged the President to act at once, and wrote: "The continued retention of those innocent people in the relocation centers would be a blot upon the history of this country" (Armor & Write, 1988, p. 11). It took one year to empty all the camps. Given train fare and \$25 in cash, the evacuees dispersed to various parts of the country to start their lives over again. Temporary shelters, hotels, converted army barracks, and public housing served as provisional homes (Armor & Write, 1988).

The internment was justified as a "military necessity." Some 40 years later the redress (compensation) movement fueled the United States government to concede that the relocation had been based on racial bias rather than on any true threat to national security (Burton, Farrell, Lord, & Lord, 2002). In 1976, President Ford rescinded the proclamation regarding Executive Order 9066 (Takaki, 1993). On August 10, 1988, President Reagan signed into law a compensation of \$20,000 each to U.S. citizens and permanent residents of Japanese ancestry who had endured "significant human suffering" during WWII (Makin, 2004). The federal government also delivered a presidential letter of apology to each recipient.

The participants in our study have been involved in an impressive array of multi-dimensional legacies, many of which have been driving forces in a now-thriving Japanese-American community in the Puget Sound region of Washington State. Some of these legacies include: (a) recognition for service in World War II; (b) establishment of a Seattle nursing home and an assisted living center, to care for disenfranchised Issei parents of sons who had died in the war; (c) leadership in the redress movement; (d) continued creation of poetry and prose about the Japanese-American experience; (e) commitment to end racial profiling; and (f) generous participation in educational studies such as this one.

As elders, the participants repeatedly stressed the importance of telling their stories for the sake of their children and grandchildren. They also emphasized the necessity of educating others about the tremendous injustices perpetrated upon an enormous group of innocent people because of their ethnic heritage.

Reasons given by the Nisei for the seemingly passive acceptance of internment included their own youth or lack of life experience, faith in the wisdom of those leading the country, a desire to prove their loyalty, and their belief in traditional Japanese values. There was also a deep-seated

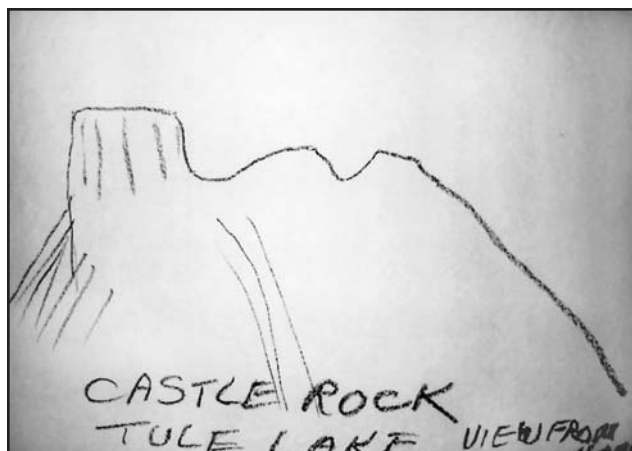


Figure 4

fear that any sign of non-compliance with government orders could jeopardize their parents' status as residents in the United States. Consequently, for a long time our participants (like many other Japanese-Americans) kept silent about what happened, shamed by having been labeled the enemy: "Were you in one of those camps? Why didn't you ever talk about it? We just couldn't..." said Sonoko. Participant Ted Kanaka was a crucial player in the redress efforts. His involvement in redress finally empowered him: It "was a cathartic experience" where suddenly "all of these things I never used to be able to say, I can say to you or anybody or a group of 100 people or 2 people. It doesn't matter any more...I lost a few friends in the process, but I gained a heck of a lot more."

Discussion of Artwork and Themes

Three of the 6 participants chose to revisit their internment experience through art making, which added richness and depth to their stories. Tani's drawing, "Our Room at Minidoka or Puyallup" (Figure 1), hauntingly depicts the spare interior space allotted to internees. The researchers noted as well an absence of color in the participants' drawings. Despite being offered a range of colors, black was chosen as their defining color. Taan reflected: "About all I remember—the tarpaper barracks were all black." Similarly, Ted responded:

You know, I don't associate too many colors with the camp for some reason. Mostly gray, I think, and white from the snow. Red for the volcanic soil around Tule Lake. Uh, kind of a gray-green and sagebrush as we looked out in Heart Mountain, looked out past the barracks.

When asked to draw his family during internment, Ted drew three mountain drawings (Figure 4). He recalled that decades after the internment, he revisited the Heart Mountain internment site. Using his memory of the mountain, he found where the barracks (demolished long ago) had been:

We found one barrack, and that was in the middle of it. But when I looked at the mountain, it didn't have the same sil-

houette that I remembered, and so we figured that that camp had a certain footprint there, and so we kind of wandered around...and finally we got to a point where the mountain looked like this as I remember drawing it.

Taan's "Racist S.O.B." image (Figure 5) clearly expresses his anger at the discrimination he experienced. As he talked about this incident, Taan animatedly described how he had drawn a memory of himself putting his hat on, to make himself appear larger to the oversized, racist railroad worker who had insulted and refused to help him.

We found that art making added details that went beyond the scope of verbal description, eliciting expression and discussion of the emotions that the participants had associated with those events. The images served as tangible springboards that triggered other forgotten memories and generated more drawings. For example, Taan, who was initially hesitant to draw because of his self-proclaimed lack of artistic ability, spontaneously started drawing other images after the discussion that resulted from his depiction of the event at the train station.

Our study found two additional elements that were woven into our participants' experiences during World War II. First was their experience of the internment seen from the perspective of a traditionally collectivist rather than individualist culture, a difference that truly set them apart from mainstream Americans (Matsui, 1996). For example, when reviewing the interview transcripts it is interesting to note how often the participants refer to "we" rather than "I." An illustration of this deep-rooted sense of belonging to the collective whole is apparent in the picture that Tani drew, which depicts her family as identical rectangular shapes (Figure 6).

Second, the tremendous resiliency shown by our participants was a theme that recurred throughout all interviews and drawings. We discovered that they had found ways of mastering and integrating their trauma quite successfully into their lives through art and other means such as poetry and social action. Whatever historical reticence they may have had about discussing internment was largely overcome in time. Yet the participants seem to feel an urgency to tell their stories, not only because of their advancing age but because they continue to feel a sense of moral obligation in the current U.S. socio-political climate. They want, in particular, to bring the dangers of racial profiling to light.

Conclusion

Our proposal that art making with Japanese-American survivors of World War II internment could offer new insights, emotions, and/or dialogue about the trauma of internment was based in part on our understanding that it is a subject the Nisei typically have been reluctant to discuss. As such, we proposed that art making could be a helpful alternative for expressing their experiences, further integrating their memories and experience of this trauma. A review of the images created by 3 of our participants, as well as artwork produced in camp, supported our hypoth-

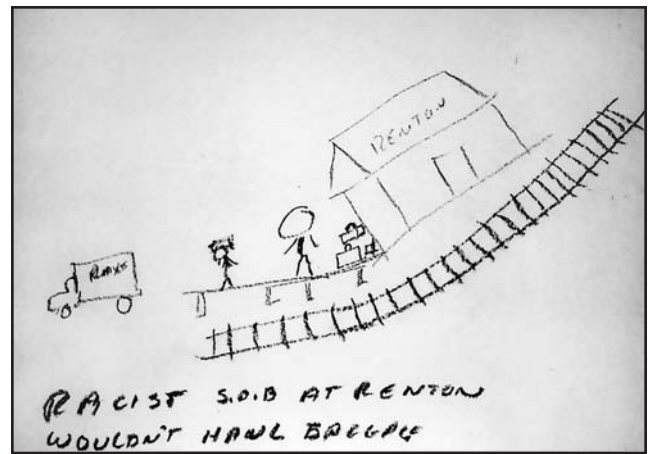


Figure 5

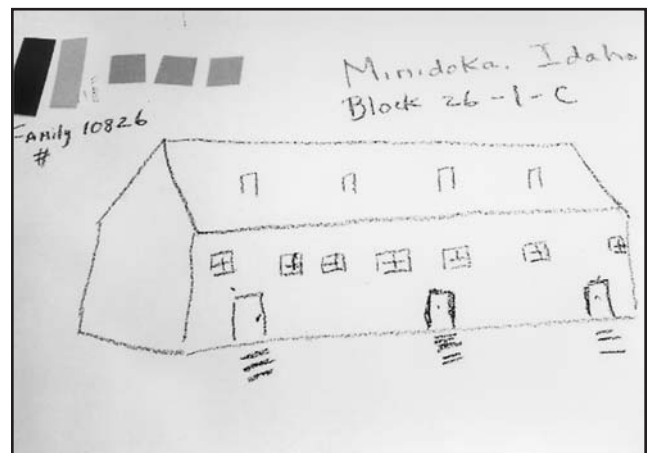


Figure 6

esis that art making with Japanese-American survivors of World War II internment may be useful for generating memory and adding depth to their stories. The art images and subsequent discussion of them, as well as art pieces that were made during the internment, support the notion that the creative process was indeed important to their quality of life and to maintaining a sense of cultural identity that had been stripped from them. In those interviews where the participants drew images, memories and the emotions accompanying them at the time were brought forth. This finding supports Chapman's (2003) proposal that art therapy can facilitate trauma recovery by utilizing the nonverbal art process to access and express frightening feelings and memories that may not be available to conscious awareness. Art therapists can be powerful in helping individuals experience emotions related to upheavals in their lives (Pennebaker, 1990).

We were honored by these participants' willingness to share their experience of the internment with us. The historical significance cannot be ignored by present and future generations. This study was timely when considering the issues art therapists are facing with respect to the mental health needs of disenfranchised people or groups that are marginalized by their ethnicity in a time of war. Meg noted:

For the sake of all minorities, to uphold the Constitution and say what is right and what should never happen again, and what should, well, like the poor Arabs, you know what's happening now, we have a lot more empathy and understanding for others, and we hope that everybody will have more of that with this coming out to the public. That they can have understanding and want to do what's right.

The search for identity—the universal question “who am I?”—is answered by the legacy of these six Nisei. Despite the injustices committed against them, they were able to creatively and optimistically survive internment and maintain a sense of pride in being Americans. They remained connected to family and community, and their courage and fortitude promoted social change. The internalized shame from being labeled “enemy aliens” has evolved into an externalized concern for the continued discriminatory actions of the United States. As survivors rather than victims, each in his or her way has found a voice.

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